

*"The Consolidated Forensic Lab is one of the most important projects of my Administration and key to improving crime, public safety, and health investigations."*  
**Adrian M. Fenty, Mayor**

## The Consolidated Forensic Laboratory in the NEWS!

### CFL construction contract selection sent to Council

The Mayor announced on May 6, 2009 that the CFL construction contract selection package was sent to City Council for review and approval. The announcement came during a press conference held in front of the project site, the former MPD First-District building in Ward 6, SW. The Mayor was accompanied by MPD Police Chief, Cathy Lanier and OPM Director, Robin-Eve Jasper. Construction, including demolition of the former 1D station, will start immediately after Council approval and scheduled to complete late 2011.



***Mayor Making CFL Announcement***

### Bowen conversion completed; MPD First District moves in

The conversion of Anthony Bowen Elementary School into the new headquarters for MPD's First District (1D) was completed in March 2009. Subsequently, the Officers and employees of the First District moved to Bowen over the first week of April, marking a huge milestone for the CFL project by clearing the former 1D site for demolition. The Bowen build-out team, consisting of MPD and OPEFM, performed the work on an aggressive schedule despite many construction challenges. MPD will also be relocating the Homicide and Sexual Offenses Branch and the Patrol Services Bureau into Bowen. The renovated school will provide dedicated community space in the school's former auditorium. The construction contractor on the project was the joint venture team of GCS-Sigal Construction. Congratulations on this tremendous accomplishment!



***MPD 1-D New HQ at Bowen ES***

#### **Contact Us:**

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## CFL Community Champions

In this issue, Community Education Project member Meghan McDonough interviewed Stephanie Handel about what the DC Consolidated Forensic Laboratory (CFL) means for individuals and families who must come to the DC Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME).

Stephanie Handel is the Coordinator of the Wendt Center for Loss and Healing's RECOVER Program, collaborating with the DC Office of the Chief Medical Examiner since 1999. RECOVER places grief counselors at the OCME to support families through the process of identifying a friend or loved one who has suffered a sudden or traumatic death. This nationally acclaimed program is staffed by masters' level mental health professionals who are uniquely trained and experienced in crisis, trauma, loss and bereavement. They provide grief support, assistance with legal paperwork, education about grief reactions and ways to cope, and community resources. In 2008, nearly 3,000 individuals were supported by RECOVER staff; over 600 were specifically affected by a homicide death. "RECOVER empowers grieving individuals from the moment condolences are offered in the waiting area," states Ms. Handel.



The RECOVER Program has become an integral part of the work of OCME. While the Program's priority is to support grieving individuals through the identification process, other services include monthly compassion fatigue sessions for the OCME staff and twice monthly presentations for State Department personnel on providing support to families coping with an unexpected or traumatic death. "This partnership is a model for working together to foster a medically and mentally healthy community around grief and trauma," Ms. Handel says.

The RECOVER staff will continue to provide support, education and resource materials to grieving families when the OCME transitions operations to the CFL. "Having a state of the art facility with all three labs will provide a one-stop shop that enhances communication

and collaboration between the three tenants. By adding DNA testing and other needed resources, the new Consolidated Lab will provide the best possible outcome for families whose lives have been affected by a crime related death," Ms. Handel says. She added, "The Wendt Center is fully committed to supporting the CFL and ensuring that the grieving DC community feels a continuum of care that is based solidly on professional experience and treating everyone with dignity and respect."

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## Community Connections

We have been roaring through the city to inform the community about the Consolidated Forensic Laboratory (CFL) and have had a welcoming reception at all the meetings we attended. The closer we get to breaking ground, the more excited the community gets about the lab! We started out by meeting with the chairs of the Citizens' Advisory Council (CAC) of the Metropolitan Police Department as a whole. Once we discussed with them our interest in presenting at each district, we were invited to speak at numerous sites. Their focus and questions were around issues of public safety, about how the new lab will impact crime-solving in the city and improve communication with victims of crime. Mr. James P. Key, Chair of the 4<sup>th</sup> District CAC, says "The Laboratory will help to improve our already efficient MPD in its excellent research in solving crimes."



Simultaneously, we began making contact with all 38 ANCs in the District, requesting an opportunity to give a brief presentation at their meetings. We wanted to focus on informing the community about the building of the lab, the improvements in programming, and the benefits the CFL will bring to the District's residents.

Commissioners throughout the District have been very supportive in helping us educate the community about the lab. Mr. James J. Sydnor, ANC Commissioner, SMD 4B04, commented, "My constituents are very interested in the positive impact the lab will have on public health and safety for the city. Some of them stated it was long overdue." CFL Community Education Project staff

Donna Alexander and Meghan McDonough have been speaking at ANC community meetings throughout the District. They get a range of questions addressing the construction start date, funding issues, employment opportunities, and how the lab can involve D.C. students.

Ms. Alexander has also been meeting with staff of the Mayor's Office of Community Relations and Services to strategize with them about specific ways to reach the people and the community organizations in their assigned wards.

The Project team has also informed commercial, religious and other neighbors adjacent to the CFL site about the project construction activities starting in the near future. The team also met with FEMS Engine 13 team to keep them abreast of project timeline and to ensure continuation of operation during the CFL construction phase, which was a concern shared by the community.

## Tech Talk: Cool Technology and What It Will Do

The largest tenant in the CFL will be the MPD Forensic Science Services Division. One of the individual units within the FSSC is the Forensic Biology Unit; one of their tasks will be to perform DNA Analysis. In this issue, we will discuss two of the instruments used in their analyses.

RT-PCR (Real-Time Polymerase Chain Reaction) - this instrument and its associated chemistry can determine how much DNA is in a sample as well as the concentration of male DNA in the given sample. When



DNA is separated from the substrate it was on (in a procedure called extraction) often times there can be other substances in the extract

(known as inhibitors) that can affect acquisition of a DNA profile. The dyes that can be found in clothing are one type of inhibitor. The presence of this type of inhibitor can be detected during the RT-PCR process. Once detected, analysts can make adjustments allowing them to obtain the DNA profile.

A second instrument used to identify the components making up the DNA profile is a Genetic Analyzer. This

instrument allows up to 16 DNA samples to be simultaneously injected into a capillary array filled with gel. The DNA migrates through the capillary and passes by a laser. During a process called amplification or PCR (polymerase chain reaction) the DNA is "tagged" with a fluorescent probe. The laser detects the probe and sends a signal to the computer that a DNA fragment was detected. After analyzing the DNA samples, the technician can produce a plot of the analysis performed, to make it easier for the results to be interpreted.

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## The Words of the Month: *Differential Extraction*

Differential Extraction is the process by which the DNA from two different types of cells can be extracted without mixing their contents. The most common application of this method is the extraction of DNA from both epithelial cells (e.g. skin cells) and sperm cells in sexual assault cases, in order to determine the DNA profiles of the victim and the perpetrator. The process success is based on the fact that the addition of a specific chemical is needed to break open the sperm cells after the skin cells have been isolated.

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## Project Timeline

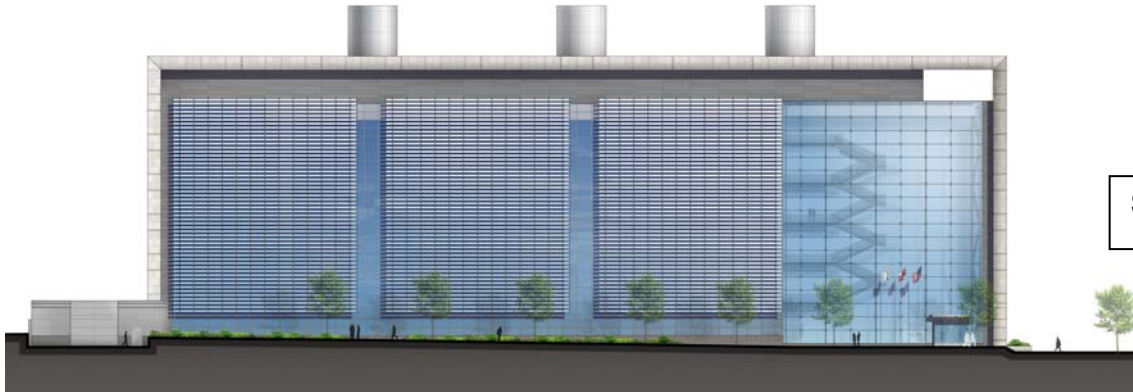
Milestone	Completion Date
Design Development	December 2007 ✓
Bid-Ready Documents	Summer 2008 ✓
Construction Bidding	Winter 2009 ✓
Award of Construction	Spring 2009
Construction Completion	Fall 2011
Occupancy	Winter 2012

The CFL is a state-of-the-art scientific laboratory facility that will house the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) Forensic Laboratory, the Department of Health (DOH) Public Health Laboratory, and the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME). It consists of a 287,000 SF building with six (6) levels above grade and two (2) levels of below grade parking. Once completed the CFL will be LEED Gold certified. The CFL is a capital project of the Office of Property Management.

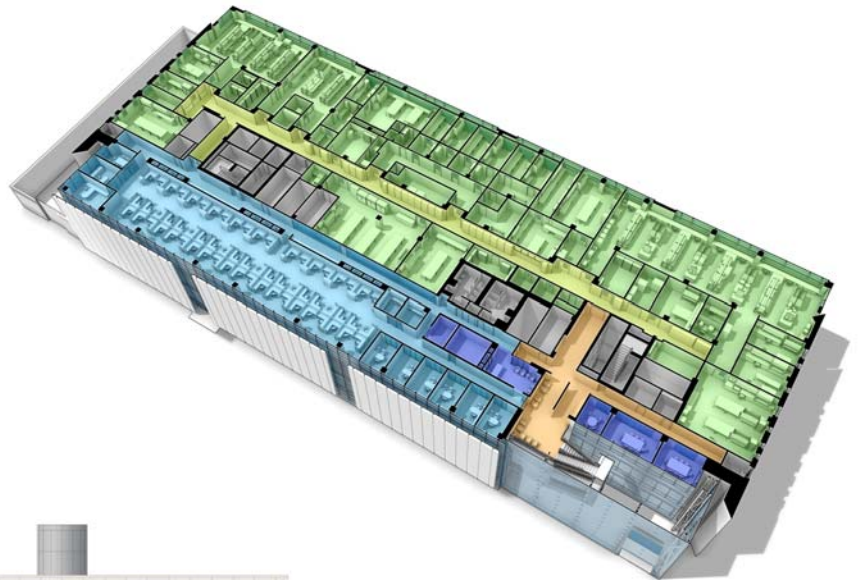


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## Additional renderings of the CFL



South Elevation (Front entrance)



3D Section through typical floor



North Elevation (Rear Entrance)